

May 1984

President Sasseen, Dean Paynter, members of the faculty and staff, and most especially my fellow classmates:

Here we sit, the 25th graduating class of the University of Dallas, the ominous class of 1984. However as I look around, instead of the despair that George Orwell predicted, I see signs of great hope. Almost four years ago we sat here and listened to Dr. Jodziewicz introducing us to U.D. I doubt if very many of us understood at that time the search for wisdom, truth, and virtue of which he spoke. Some of us were brought here by generous scholarships, others by the prospect of Rome; some just wished to get away from home. Still others had heard that the drinking age in Texas was only eighteen. Yet that disparate group of freshmen has become the cohesive family I see before me now. In some way, whether we like it or not, we have all become U.D.-lifers.

What is it about the U.D. community and the U.D. education that makes its students so distinctive and bonds them together so firmly? The obvious answer is our liberal arts, core curriculum. As the old purpose statement said- "The primary purpose of the University of Dallas is the pursuit of wisdom- through a submission to the act of knowing, operating on the heritage preserved from the past, and constantly reevaluated in terms of the future." Translated into reality, we have gained a firm basis in Western culture and thought that has enabled us to tackle intelligently almost any subject from a wide variety of viewpoints. After four years we all share a common outlook

gathered from the core, regardless of our different majors. How many nights have we spent in the dorm halls, drinking beer and discussing the nature of the good? Every day, we meet at the cappuccino bar, talking about everything from Ben Johnson to freshwater ecosystems, from getting in touch with the world soul to the latest personals in the Dallas Observer.

However our education is based not only on the Western experience, but on the Western experience as Catholic. U.D. is not a Catholic university because she is sponsored by the diocese, nor because many priests populate the faculty here. U.D. is a Catholic center of education because here it is freely recognized that the fulness of truth resides in the Catholic Church. Some might call this Catholic bigotry. However bigotry involves irrational condemnation due to a prejudiced point of view. Certainly the Catholic faith cannot be called a prejudiced point of view. Nor does U.D. condemn other points of view; she examines them from the Catholic viewpoint, searching not as much for differences as for points of agreement, a search that leads to a richer understanding of her own faith. A syncretic system, which sees all viewpoints as equally valid, actually believes in none of them. If U.D. is to uphold the Catholic faith, she must let it be the basis for all her education. "Nor does this," as the old handbook says, "endanger academic integrity or narrow the scope of intellectual inquiry." People of all faiths are welcome here, not only Catholics, for who can deny

the value of studying, on its own merits, a system different from one's own?

What we will remember about U.D. may not be as much our education as how we were educated. They say that 90% of a college education occurs outside the classroom. At U.D. that is certainly true. We have grown up here, from the homes of the faculty at their orientation week parties, to our grungy dormitories, through the streets of Rome, and in our final hours of anticipation and rejoicing these last two weeks. U.D. is a community, a community of love, the like of which I have never before seen in my short life. Here, faculty, staff, and students intermingle, each helping the other as they are able. The warm smile of Mrs. Novinski as she untangles your schedule, the friend who helped you stagger back to Hotel La Villa after a long night at a birreria, Father Cain's talking frog, the roommate whose notes you borrowed for the day you skipped class to go out to Bachman Lake, Father Chris' daily chats at the cappuccino bar, playing with little Johannes back in Rome: all these things have made the U.D. experience unforgettable. Although we've all had our disagreements, we've truly become family. After four years, and especially after the Rome semester, we know each other's strenghts and weaknesses almost as well as our own; yet, like family, we accept each other as we are and do what we can for the other.

And now we are all departing, all to different tasks and different locations. Still, we will carry U.D. with us wherever we go. We have been educated to be leaders, and leaders we

shall be. However, the example of leadership we have been given is particularly Christian, the leadership of service. The Cowans, the Novinskis, Dr. Jodziewicz: these people have led U.D. and the U.D. community by devoting their lives, their hearts, and their very selves to the school. We are all called to the same struggle, the path of the suffering servant. In whatever path of life we lead, we are called to devote not only our lives but our very selves to others in Christ. From now on this leadership of service will grow to be more difficult, and success may often be negligible. Remember, though, that what a man may see as a very little success can be transformed through the merits of Christ into a great triumph, so that all our small daily tasks done for others can become a great power for good in this world. The love that God has filled us with by bringing us all to U.D. will be an ever present source of strength for us in all our struggles in the years to come.

I thank you all; I wish you good luck, and as Tiny Tim would say, "God bless us everyone, even Mr. Scrooge," but before I go, the senior class would like to honor the faculty with a song in appreciation for all they have given us.

Twas Friday morn when we set sail
And we were not far from the land,
When our captain he spied a mermaid so fair,
With a comb and a glass in her hair.

REFRAIN

And the ocean waves do roll,
And the stormy winds do blow, (blow, blow blow)
As we four sailors go skipping o'er the top,
And the landlubbers lie down below, below, below;
And the landlubbers lie down below.

Then up spoke the captain of our gallant ship,
And a fine old man was he:
A fishy mermaid has warned me of our doom-
We shall sink to the bottom o' the sea.

REFRAIN

Then up spoke the first mate of our gallant ship,
And a fine spoken man was he:
O, I've got a wife in Brooklyn by the sea,
And tonight a widow she will be.

REFRAIN

Then up spoke the cabin-boy of our gallant ship,
And a brave young lad was he:
O, I've got a sweetheart in Salem by the sea,
And tonight she'll be weeping for me.

REFRAIN

Then up spoke the cook of our gallant ship,
And a crazy old butcher was he:
O, I care much more for me pots and me pans
Than I do for the bottom o' the sea.

REFRAIN

Three times 'round spun our gallant ship;
Three times 'round spun she.
(Mournfully)
Three times 'round spun our gallant ship,
Then she sank to the bottom o' the sea.

REFRAIN

John Martin Norris
Valedictory Address
May 3, 1984